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Matter and Stile

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SERMONS,

Wri[illegible] Dea-
ton, [illegible] D.D.

LOND[illegible]
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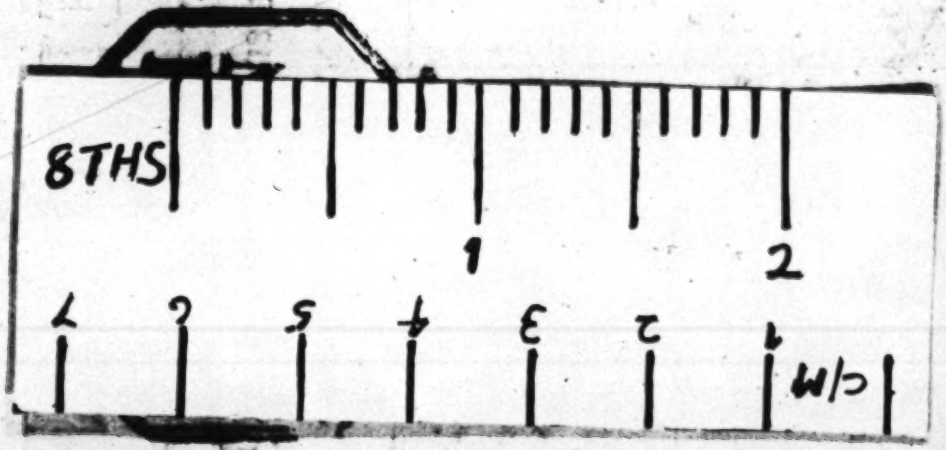
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DIRECTIONS

Concerning the

Matter and Style

OF

SERMONS.

Written to *W. R.* a young Deacon, by *J. A.* D.D.

IT was when the Witty and Severe Author of *The Contempt of the Clergy* had laid together the most ridiculous passages of Sermons, gathered for the

moſt part, either from *Non-Conformiſts*, or Divines of other times, that you deſired me to give you ſome rules of Preaching, that might be uſefull to a New beginner, for the ſecuring him out of the ſecond Edition enlarged. I then granted you a ſudden promiſe which now in a Country retirement, I am at leſure to remember, and the ſame time to conſider, the difficulty of the performance both in relation to the comprehenſivene

ſiveneſs of the deſign, and as to the exact judgement required in pronouncing in ſo weighty a caſe; but ſince perſons of greater abilities are likely to put you off with the ſame excuſe, I will provide that rather then you ſhall want all directions, you ſhall only be deſtitute of better ones. Yet herein with modeſty enough it may be pretended, that as in other inſtances, ſo in this a man may diſtinctly form an higher character, then that to which in his

own practice he hath attained. So *Antony* the Orator is brought in by *Tully*, affirming that he could give a deſcription of an Orator, that is, of ſuch an accompliſhed one, that he knew not whether he ever lived in the World. The like may be obſerved in the Teachers of Poetry, let *Scaliger* be an illuſtrious example hereof, then whom none writ better about Poeſie, and few of his rank meaner Verſe. In this Eſſay I reſolve on ſet purpoſe

purpoſe to paſs by many things in greateſt reputation, with the antient Maſters of *Roman* pleading, conſidering that the beſt of that number exempts Philoſophers, and the Directors of manners from their ſtrict obſervation, and ſeeing how that ſome too cloſely imitating in the Pulpit thoſe Advocates, have look'd liker old School-boyes, then grave Divines.

Let us now begin with the matter of Sermons, and think a while of the

ſubject of Divinity-diſcourſes. It is not ſufficient to juſtifie our choice herein, that the Text is part of the Holy Scriptures: for beſides that the Sermon is oft nothing neer the Text, but that it takes place immediately after it. You may know, that though all thoſe Sacred Writings are profitable, yet it is not indifferent, where wee pitch our cloſeſt thoughts. We ought not then to chuſe obſcure paſſages, or ſublime controverſies, or nice

nice ſpeculations to be propounded to any in publick, much leſs to the uncapable multitude. It is certain that ſome paſſages of Scripture are hard to be underſtood. Now as to what was ſaid of controverſies and Speculations, whether it was the deſign of that Book to reſolve ſuch, I will not ſay; but I am ſure it is the work thereof, ſharply to rebuke the enquirers into them. Yet further as to the difficult places, which occur therein, it will nei-

ther detract from the ſufficiency of the rule, nor adde to the claimed authority of the pretended infallible Judge, when we ſhall acknowledge, that we do not clearly apprehend the meaning of ſome perplext ſentences: for he that believes that God employed infinite wiſdom, and goodneſs on our behalf, when he delivered thoſe Articles and precepts to the World, may readily conclude that ſomwhat thereof is not neceſſary for our ſal-

ſalvation upon this very argument, becauſe it is unconquerably difficult: yet ſtill there is inſtruction to be had even from what is unintelligible, in that we are taught to acknowledge the diſtances and boundaries betwixt the Divine and men's underſtandings. So that that ſingle perſon who ſayes he knowes clearly the abſtruſeſt ſecrets thereof, doth in this particular ſit in the Temple of God, as God, and at the beſt looks like *Adam* when he

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was a falling, who would be like God in his knowing. His confident vaunting of himſelf, ought not to induce any man to forſake a reaſonable Religion, no more then in a great diſeaſe a man would quit a rational Phyſitian when he hears of a bold Mountebank, who proclaims he hath got the Universal Medicine; but am ſlipt into Preachin unawares, and that like young Parſon, with a flin at the Pope. If you woul hear what hard ſubjec

of Preaching thoſe are, againſt which I adviſe you, they are ſuch as theſe; How *Adam*, who was made perfect, could poſſibly be prevail'd upon with a temptation? How (if you were of the opinion that the liberties of the Will conſiſts in an indifferency) Free-will and Gods fore-knowledge of its action can be reconciled? In ſhort, I mean all thoſe Controverſies, which are of a confeſs'd extract from the quarrelſom Learning of School-

men.

men. Nor would I have you to ſet up for a Myſtery-man in any part of their profeſſion, either to ſpy ſome lurking ſecret in the plaineſt Verſe of the Bible, or to unriddle the darkeſt Prophecies, ſo as to apply them with a little Hiſtory, and quibble to what times and perſons you pleaſe. They may alike almoſt agree to any, and are entitled to this or that, only by that rule of the Civil Law, which ſays, *That thoſe things which are of an uncertain ownerſhip,*

ſhip, *belong to the firſt poſſeſſor*. Beſides, however this may ſeem a pompous or gay piece of knowledge, yet indeed it's commonly pretended to by the moſt ignorant. I remember ſince I was a School-boy, how one of the Gentle Craft did courteouſly aſſure me, that though he had never learned to read, yet if I would take the pains to read to him *Daniel*, and the *Revelations*, he would make me in two hours time to underſtand all thoſe beaſts

and

and horns, both great and little, and whatſoever elſe therein was hard to be underſtood : I did (as bound) kindly thank him ; but I thought my ſelf too young then, and ſtill believe that my parts are not mature enough for that task, it being more than probable, that thoſe ſecrets of Heaven (even after the phraſe of them was publiſh'd) were at the moſt only manifeſt to them by whoſe hands they paſſed into the World. There are another ſort of

Doctrines,

Doctrines, which though uſefull and true, ought not to be the frequenteſt matter of Sermons; thoſe are the Fundamentals of our Religion. It is not practiſed by the wiſeſt Teachers of other Sciences, that they ſhould ſtill be turning back to prove their Elements and firſt Principles; but having fairly enough once ſhewed them, they proceed on, that ſo the firſt may make way for the entertainment of what follows; and afterwards the truth of the later

later Propoſitions being evident, and their admirable connexion with all foregoing clearly appearing, there may be thereby a fuller ſtrength added to the leading notions. I may in this diſwaſion further adde, that too long inſiſting, or often repeating the arguments in theſe points, affords an occaſion to ſome to think that we doubt thereof our ſelves, and meaſure the hearers incredulity by our own, ſeeing that it is natural, though not politick, for men

men to vouch moſt for their integritie in thoſe inſtances, wherein their conſciences do moſt condemn them. I need not tell you, that what is now ſaid does not debarr the ſtudy of reaſon to confirm our Faith, ſeeing that without this I know not how Religion can bee kept alive, it not being ſufficient to have it cheriſhed either by Enthuſiaſm or bare Tradition, both of them bad Nurſes. And as to that conſtant manner of Preaching in the

places

places of your Charge and mine, compoſed of another ſett of people, it may be ſaid, that being uſeleſs there, it may like ſome good Phyſick to bodies that need it not, become dangerous. It muſt be granted indeed to be oftner requiſite for thoſe Auditors, who are obliged to converſe with the *Literati* of Atheiſm, and with ſuch compleat *Vitioſi*, who have drawn up Schemes and Confeſſions of Irreligion: whereas all that lies upon us,

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and moſt Divines near this caſe, is, to remove the Lazy miſtakes, and to convince how unavailable, a ſolitary ſpeculative faith is, and what a killing perill there is in the delayes of a thorow Reformation. Somewhat more is to be admoniſhed as to the matter of Sermons, that you always chuſe that which is moſt ſuitable, whether pleaſing or no, to the preſent ſtate of the people to whom you addreſs, which rules, prudence, and the know-

ledge

ledge of what is decorous will fully ſuggeſt to you. This alone attended to, will render any man a tolerable Proficient both in Morals and Oratory.

I will now go forward towards the more difficult part of my Undertaking that is, to diſcourſe concerning Style: the beginning whereof muſt be a ſingle words; of theſe which are currant, and which not, we may be helped to judge by that common ſaying, *that Words are as Money is*

he agreement betwixt
he two is not only this,
hat the value of both de-
ive from the common
stimate, which a consi-
lerable body of men do
ut upon them; but with-
ll, that one as well as the
ther, must passe, till
ied down by a great
uthoritie; and that as a
ong præscription and u-
sage hath made some for-
eign Coin to go readily
mongst us, as if it had
ome from the *Tower*-
inck; the like is it with
ords of several Nations
and

and Languages which ar
mixt amongst our own
but I will not weary th
comparison, though i
could carry us further
That which I recommen
unto you in this argu
ment, is, that you do no
call back into use, word
out of date, though lai
aside not very antiently
as the fault of *Anton*
was in his Letters to *A*
gustus, nor that you stam
new ones, either conj
gates, or compounds,
many of the late posse
sors of Pulpits usurped
bus pow

power to do, and beſides this, you muſt beware that you do not bring in ſuch words either from the learned or modern Languages, which have hitherto been ſtrangers to our ſpeech, except it be eaſe of the higheſt neceſſity, where your thoughts cannot be fitly expreſſed by our own, but may be in another, and well underſtood by thoſe to whom you ſpeak: to introduce new ones, is to diſparage, without eaule, the *Engliſh* tongue, to which by our birth

birth we owe a reſpect, and withall, it is a preſumption for a private perſon to naturalize, and give the right of the Nation to Outlandiſh encroachers. *Tiberius* when he had occaſion in the Senate to mention the *Greek* word *Monopolie* in its own termination, begged their pardon humbly. And when in a Decree of theirs was recited the ſame Country-word *Emblem*, he commanded that it ſhould be blotted out, and be ſignified by

not

not word for word, yet by a larger circuit of what was truly *Roman*. And we read of a learned *Grecian* Biſhop, who would not allow of the New-Teſtament - Original for a *bed*, but he was juſtly and ſharply rebuked for it by a worthier perſon of his own Order, who told him, that he was not better than him; who uſed that word in writing of the Goſpel. In ſhort, chuſe words, as well as you can, wholly *Engliſh* and ſuch as are the image's

of your meaning, and which ſerve to humour the aim of the ſentence whereof they are part: and of words thus qualified take thoſe, which moſt readily offer themſelves. The next thing that you are to look out for, when you have pitched upon the ſubject of diſcourſe, is method, and a fit rancking of your thoughts; without this he who through an unmanaged heat of wit goes about to compoſe, is as unſucceſsfull, as that Souldier,

dier, who is high-mettled, but never train'd or diſciplin'd. But if you ask me what method you ſhould conſtantly uſe, I muſt tell you no one. Many things bring their own diſpoſition and order along with them, and ſtubbornly refuſe to be ſubject to any other Lawes: But if you demand, which is the moſt uſefull and teaching method? I think, where the matter will bear it, it is that of Propoſition, Confirmation, and Inference. This laſt is the ſame with

which the beſt Rhetoritians adviſed to make up the Peroration: all this is in plain terms, no more then Doctrine, Reaſon, and Uſe. You may have known many Preachers at preſent, who are very ſhie in naming thoſe words, becauſe they were ſo frequent amongſt the diſſenting Miniſterie; but they may remember withall that this very method is both præſcribed and practiſed by the excellenteſt Church-Orators of the *Roman*-Communion. And

Poſſidonius

Possidonius in *Seneca*'s Epistles, is reported to have præscribed a method, which you will find very agreeable to what is here recommended.

Before you come to the Proposition it may be you would look for an entrance upon the discourse, commonly called the *Exordium*. As to this, if you will needs have one, let it be very short, and such wch all along hath an eye what followes: let it be taken from the nature of the subject, and quickly

fall again into that whence it did arise. It may best be made by some weighty sentence, or comprehensive rule, relating to your main purpose: yet even this, though good, is no wayes necessary in Moral Orations, but instead thereof, you may give an account, how those words, which you chuse to speak upon, depend on the foregoing, and what they design to treat of: but beware especially that your Preface be not a tedious beg-

ging of their good will and attention. This is boyiſh, and ſmells of a Grammar-ſchool. *Ariſtotle* does well reprove this cuſtom, by ſaying that it is not the office of a ſingle part of an Oration, but of each, to render the hearers attentive, and thereupon it is (as he proceeds) ridiculous to beſtow that invitation in the beginning, ſeeing that any man is more apt to liſten diligently, at the entrance, rather than in the progreſs of a diſcourſe.

When you have done this, ſee whether your Text needs to be explained; if ſo, do it with the greateſt diſpatch, without alledging various lections, or different opinions, and your large refutation of all, but one. This practice is pompous, and begets ſometimes the reputation of a Critick or diſputant: neither of which are the offices of a common and popular Preacher, nor the advantages of his people, except they ought to learn Scepticiſm

and

and wrangling, inſtead of real goodneſs. If your Text be ſomewhat long, or contain more things in it expreſly or by conexion, you may then divide it, & lay them aſunder, ſo that you do not quarter ſingle ſentences into words by themſelves, ſeeing that each word taken alone is to be conſidered only in the explication: It ſhould not be catch'd at and run away with, till your Concordance and Common-place Book are quite spent, and can do no

more : for by this fault you are in danger of miſſing that ſcope, at which the Text (had it been out of your hands) would have aimed, and hereby you become guilty of a leſſer ſort of falſe doctrin, when you put that upon the words, which although true in it ſelf, is falſe as to its inference, whence it pretends to derive its authority ; juſt as a falſe Syllogiſm may conſiſt of all Propoſitions true, if they be united amiſſe. When you have cleare

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and distributed the *Theme*; it will be expedient that you declare what course and method you will use, what you intend to perform before you conclude, and to number up all the particulars, on which you shall speak. This order, though it seems artless and plain, yet it hath many advantages and conveniences; it makes the matter clearer, and the Auditory more diligent and teachable, when its understood about what things you intend

tend to ſpeak. Few men being pleaſed with ſtanding in the dark, or being led blindfold in a Labyrinth. Beſides all this a propounded Method will furniſh you with ſeveral repoſitories, where you may lay up apart all that belongs to the ſame kind. When you have gone on thus far, the next thing is to deliver one or more Propoſitions, importing the main ſenſe and deſign of the Text; herein care muſt be taken, that the Propoſitions doe agree

to

to that, whence they are fetch'd, that they be very ſhort, and laid down in the plaineſt words, which being done, you may ſtrengthen the credit and belief of them by like paſſages of Scripture, with ſome light, but not empty paraphraſe thereof, and (if occaſion be) you ſhould with an undiſcernible art give a due extent or confinement to doubtfull phraſes in the Propoſition, not with that ſet formality, as is allowably uſed in Univerſity-

ſity-poſitions and determinations: but (as I ſaid) with an undiſcernible art, ſeeing this work would be needleſs, where men obſerve the juſt rule of a Propoſition, to wit, an open plainneſs, yet the practice of this is oft difficult by reaſon of the other rule joyned to it, it being certain, that he who labours to be ſhort is in danger of obſcuritie in diſcourſe. Afterwards muſt follow the confirmation of the doctrine lately propos'd; as to this it

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is the boaſt of Logicians, that they ſupply the Orator with all that he uſes. You have all theſe Common places and ſeats of arguments in the books of your firſt inſtitutions towards Philoſophie, or to ſay more truly, you had them from the firſt that the ſoul did upon its hereditary ſtock of notions begin to inquire & doubt, though art hath ſince given them names, & ranks and fineneſs. In the uſe of thoſe Topicks do not oblige your ſelf to give a taſt

taſt of each in your arguments, ſince its at all times needleſs, and for the moſt part impoſſible to be well done : there is indeed a remedy for this propounded by many Profeſſors of Rhetorick, that you ſhould ſtuff in the worſt arguments into the middle : ſo that, if they cannot defend the cauſe, they may however be kept ſafe by their fellowes ; but a better advice is to caſt them away, and be contented with a few, ſo that they be ſerviceable, eſteeming

ming it an office of prudence, rather to weigh then to number your proofs. In the confirmation of practical Doctrines, (in which I hope you will chiefly employ your Preaching abilities) you may be furnished sufficiently from such heads as these, to wit, the Attributes of God's Holiness, Justice, Soveraignty, Allsufficiency, Faithfullness, Mercie, Infinite Knowledge, and the rest of the Divine perfections: furthermore from the dictates

ſtates of Nature, and te
ſtimony of Conſcience,
and lovelineſs of Vertue
and deformitie of Vice
from the obligations of
created being, and edifi
cation of others, and va
nity of the World; an
certainty of future re
wards and punishment
and the hazard of miſca
riage. Theſe and ſuch like
inſtances, as they a
worthy to become the
matter of Sermons, a
fit likewiſe to confirm a
perſwade the duties
Chriſtian Religion.

you

your choice of ſome of
theſe, ſee that the proof
be not far-fetch'd, nor let
it be ſtrained or preſſed
to ſerve your purpoſe.
For in the latter caſe it's
no argument, and in the
former its no proof to the
man, though it may be to
the thing. Take heed too
that the confirmation be
not made with plauſible
ſimile's, or large Allego-
ries, ſince one of them
gives beauty, but not
ſtrength to truth, the o-
ther to wit, a pile of Me-
taphors affords neither

this

this nor that. When you have prepared the minds of your hearers, and have perſwaded them of the benefit or neceſſity of that towards which you have earneſtly preſſed, there must be added in the concluding part of the diſcourſe an exhortation grounded upon what was lately affirmed & proved: till now you had to deal only with the judgement, and have endeavoured to evince the certainty & importance of your Propoſition. This attempt hath had

had as much ſucceſs as could be expected, if you have by all that was ſaid begot in them a belief that theſe things are not to be doubted of; but ſtill you are ſhort of your end, which is to bring them to practice and the active part of Religion. To accompliſh this, we muſt ſollicit the affair, not with the underſtanding alone, but at the ſame time with the affections of the ſoul. Exhortation is that which makes the addreſs to theſe, and cauſes the perſon's ſubmiſſion

ſubmiſſion to his dut
not out of conſtraint
which is the moſt that th
confirmation could do
but willingly and with
great deal of compla
cence and readineſs. Thi
is procured principally b
the conſideration of th
eaſineſs, or at leaſt th
certain poſſibility of th
performance and event
You may further mov
the affections by ſuch con
derations as theſe, tha
ſuch or ſuch a work ca
ries with it much of tru
honor and reputation
tha

that it is nothing but e-
quity and fit that it ſhould
be done, that it is pious,
and a ſuitable expreſſion
of thanks, and that ſup-
poſing the worſt which
can be objected, it's ſafe
and prudent. But a-
mongſt other perſwaſives,
forget not that, derived
from pleaſure and delight,
by this the firſt temptation
became unhappily ſuc-
ceſsfull, and by the like
muſt we reduce men to
Holineſs and Vertue, even
by demonſtrating, that
Religion is a way of plea-
ſantneſs,

ſantneſs, and that Morti
fication it ſelf brings joy
as its fruit to thoſe, who
have made it their exer
ciſe. Theſe are the mo
tives of the greateſt reach
amongſt all that I remem
ber. When you enlarge
upon them, and appl
them to the matter o
your exhortation, la
them to the ſins contrar
thereunto, and ſhew how
great an inconſiſtence and
diſagreement there is be
twixt thoſe ſolid encou
ragements of humane acti
ons, and the nature and
quality

quality of that ſinfull courſe. I have now told you how you ſhould incourage your hearers in this part of the Sermon; the next is how you ſhould behave your ſelf herein. Beware that it come not too faintly and coldly from you; the deſign is to inflame and kindle the affections, and if you be but luke-warm, they may be benummed: here you muſt give your ſelf that liberty and boldneſs of ſpeech, which reſembles *ex tempore* talk upon the

warmth of a ſudden and preſent thought; yet with this caution, that you do not on either hand tranſgreſs the laws of decency, by high flights enthuſiaſtick and giddy, or elſe by a groveling ſtoop to clowniſh phraſes, ſuch which may be taxed as a rude treatment of a noble ſubject. Sometimes the nature of the thing diſcourſed is ſuch, that it implies ſome other doctrine and truth of belief; this is to be taken notice of in the application, if it be leer in

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what hath been ſaid, and ſeems to be denied either in the ſpeculation or practice of many men. I need not ſet down the lawes of conſequences ſeeing they are to be had in every book of Topicks & Axioms; but in the choice of them you muſt uſe diſcretion, ſome of them being only ſerviceable for the fallacies of the Schools, or ſpecious pleadings in Civil Judicatories, but no wayes fitted for that fair force and evidence required in divine

arguments. That which is next a-kin to this ſort of application, is the confutation of errors about the doctrine. In this performance you need not turn over all the ancients, who have wrote of Hereſies now forgot, nor take up the Authors, and ſentence them & their books, ſo long after both of them have been buried out of the ſight of the Church, it is enough, if you can deal with thoſe which are now dangerous and in preſent reputation with unſtable

unstable Novellists, and even these you should handle but seldom, and with so much plain shortness, as considering that the maintainers of such untoward opinions are not within hearing of your Sermon, and the best disposed of them, who are present, find no entertainment in tedious confutations of that which they were alwayes satisfied of, that it was false. The best general rule herein is derived from the common nature of all

truth, eſpecially of that which depends upon, or leaſt proceeds from, revelation made in Holy-Scripture, it muſt be uniform, probable, excellent and productive of good: So that according to theſe undoubted notions of truth we may condemn of falſhood and a lie, whatever is inconſiſtent with other cleer and evident Propoſitions, and we may juſtly ſuſpect that, which, weighing all evidences and circumſtances, ſeems not likely to be the

mind of the Author, and we muſt deny that which ſeems unworthy and unbecomming Gods perfection, or beneath and beſide the deſign of the Goſpel, and further wee muſt utterly reject that as untrue, which hath ill natural conſequences, and wholly uſeleſs. To the convincing of Errors belongs reproof and ſevere expoſtulation, this does further apply your doctrine, and as the former laid it home to faults and miſtakes, ſo

this rebuke brings it closer to the guilty person. One vertue that should attend this great office is a keenness and edge in your stile, wherein there should be no appearance of designed smoothness, or carefull ordering of the chiding speech, but much of strength and earnestness and hearty vigour, yet loose not the reins to your passions so far, that instead of rebuking sharply, you run into downright railing, for if you have to do with generous

 mindes,

mindes, you may abate ſomewhat even of that robuſt force lately ſpoken of, but where that cannot be done, ſtill theſe meaſures are not be exceeded. The beſt courſe herein is to expoſe the ſin to their view, with all the attendant aggravations & threats, and leaſt they ſhould think that you are become their enemie, and thereupon refuſe your correction, you muſt entertain and profeſs a tender reſpect and real deſire of their welfare and

hope of amendment.

The laſt part of application, which I ſhall mention, is the matter of comfort derived from the premiſſes of your Sermon. This muſt not be neglected, when the condition of the people requires, and the precedent diſcourſe may afford it, ſeeing the name and deſign of the Goſpel intimates, that the publiſhing ſuch glad tidings is the duty of its Preachers, and the priviledge of its obedient ſubjects. This comfort

fort ſuitable to the cauſes of ſorrow is to be applied in the caſes of diſturbance either for ſin, or calamity; in the former, to wit, of ſin, there is no hopes or encouragements to be given, except upon the terms of repentance. Beware that you play not the *Antinomian* in this point, by taking away ſorrow, whilſt the juſt cauſe thereof, that is, confirmed habits of wickedneſs and vice ſtill remain and ſtay behind: but this condition being inſerted

ſerted, you may comfort the ſorrowfull offendor, by diſplaying the divine bounty and pardoning goodneſs, by ſetting before the eyes the promiſes of Scripture, and inſtances from thence of forgiveneſs granted to the ſame ſins, or to equal or greater, the unchangeableneſs of Gods proceedings in ſuch affairs, the boundleſs reach of Chriſts ſatisfaction, and the danger of deſpair. As to the other occaſion of comforts, to wit, calamity, and worldly

ly disappointments, the states thereof are so numerous and different, that no few rules can be dictated as a whole remedy for all the wounds made upon the minde: yet these following are the most comprehensive, and some of them well nigh universal, as for example, you may shew, that excessive grief is a weak and an unmanly passion, that it is beneath the dignity of a wise man as discovering unsetlednesse and want of principles, and

ignorance

ignorance of the true cauſes of joy and ſorrow. You may further proceed to ſet forth, that immoderate ſorrow is much more unſeemly in a Chriſtian, whoſe religion, if it had prevail'd upon him, would have taught the conqueſt of all paſſions, and of this particularly from ſuch arguments as theſe, the certainty of eternal happineſs hereafter, the right of God over us for affliction, though innocent, the juſtice of the puniſhment by reaſon of guilt,

guilt, the favour in remitting much of the due penalty, his love in purposing the rest of it for mans good, his knowledge of what is best for them, as considering, that this which seems an ill condition, is expedient as a preservative against the great mischiefs of uninterrupted prosperity, and as an honourable occasion to shew the truest gallantry of soul. Further you may appease their trouble by demonstrating the unreasonable-

neſs thereof, ſeeing they have loſt nothing, having only poſſeſſion not title, and that they cannot like children expect to have it, becauſe they cry: add to this that their miſery is not ſo grievous as they make it, nor ought they to expect an immunity from thoſe ſufferings, which either in the ſame degree of kind or equivalence are undergone by ſo many in the world. In adminiſtring of ſuch like comforts, you muſt not endeavour at firſt wholly

wholly to ſtop the courſe of tears, leſt you make them the more to exceed, and ſooner to break over their banks : but inſtead hereof declare how ſadly you are ſenſible of what they feel ; for elſe you ſeem rather to reproach their weakneſs, then to give relief towards the removal of their melancholly. The beſt way then to introduce what you would ſay to the preſent purpoſe, is to tell them, that you have in the ſame and like caſes

ſes found great tranquillity of minde by thoſe meditations, which you now offer to them, and doubt not; but that it may have as happy ſucceſs with them, as you have formerly experienc'd from thence upon your ſelf.

It might be expected that we ſhould give an account of that part of application which conſiſts in examining our ſelves, as to the divine vertues and duties treated on before in the Sermon, but this

is

is moſt fitly done before you come to the reaſons, in anſwer to the queſtion wherein it conſiſts, though afterwards to be reinforc'd in the exhortation with a ſhort and ſerious reckoning up of all proper ſignes. I have hitherto diſcourſed only of the matter of Sermons, excepting a little that was ſaid concerning the choice of words, this laſt part concerning method and invention being the ſecond matter of Sermons, as a Text is the firſt matter.

ter. I muſt now go ove
the work again, and add
to the frame and firſt
draught ſome ſeemly co
lours and modeſt orna
ments, that which ſup
plies all theſe without a
ny other directions, is a
well-order'd and diſcreet
imitation, hereby you
are furniſhed with plenty
of the beſt words, with
variety of uſefull figures,
and with the manner of
compoſing and putting
ſentences well together:
You cannot complain
that our Nation affords

not

not good patterns for our imitation, no Country having ever shewed better Breachers than ours; and ours never so good ones as now; especially for the vertues of agile and vigorous management of real arguments. As oft as I congratulate in my thoughts this improvement of our age, I am apt to assign it to the same cause, from whence the Author of the Dialogue at the end of *Tacitus* derives the highest pitch of Eloquence in the

dayes

dayes of *Cicero*; to wit
from the Civil Warrs and
Seditions of the people
this made Orators as well
as Souldiers, and at the
same time put them upon
whetting both their stile
and swords; but this
our continued happiness
that whilst the other is laid
by to rust, the *English*
stile remains bright and
sharp: so that you see
whom, amongst our own
I would wish you to imi-
tate, the latest and pre-
sent Writers and Preach-
ers, for this following
reason

reaſon too, becauſe the forms and modes of acceptable ſpeaking are chang'd by time, and ſeeing that what is moſt acceptable to the moſt, who are allow'd judges in their own dayes, is alwayes in this kind the beſt; the rule of words, being founded in cuſtome and not in nature, as which in themſelves, are no more then empty ſounds. Here you ought to chuſe the beſt, ſince moſt is to be learn'd from them, and that you are to come

behind

behind them whoever they are, it ſignifying the ſame to imitate and to follow. The feweſt in a ſort are moſt profitably imitated, though it be requiſite to be acquainted with many; yet follow not one kind of ſtile upon all occaſions, nor conſtantly in all its parts. Several men have excellencies, which are peculiarly their own, in ſome you may admire a ſtrange vigour, in others diligence and induſtry; in this man an exact judgement, in thi

this other a ſmooth ſtream of language carrying along very good ſence. Beware of thoſe faults, which by the unwary imitator, are miſtaken as like to the excellencies of their choſen authors, that when you deſign to ſpeak grave and with a majeſtie, it prove not ſwollen and puft up, and that inſtead of a plain and familiar ſpeech, you fall not flat into mean and ſordid expreſſions. Nor ſuffer your fancy to be tempted towards following of Poe-

tick or Romantick writings, the latter being good for nothing, and the other best in its own measures. But in all the exercises performed to the example of your Masters, consult your own strength and observe what it can bear, and under what it stoops, nothing being more loathsom to the curious then to discover a sorry essay, falling monstrously short in its emulation of a worthy author, and about that compass and sort wherein you find

find your self most successfull, be you chiefly employed; yet so that you practise, as the matter requires, all possible varietie, and tire not those to whom you speak, with repeating still over again the same fine feat of Rhetorick.

I mentioned to you a little before the variety of usefull figures, I will now give you some of them, with this caution in the first place, that you do not lay on too much hereof in your speeches: for

though apart, they are very pleaſant, yet taken together in a great quantity, like ſweet things they glut and oppreſs; whereas moderately uſed, you will find many figures both beauteous and ſerviceable. They ſerve both for a juſt framing of images, and for enlivening them after they are made; amongſt images, whereby we repreſent nearly to the underſtanding ſomewhat which is farther diſtant, *Metaphors* have the precedence. I know this is wholly

wholly rejected by ſome, who conſider not, that the poverty of conceptions, or the ſcarcity of words conſtrains, that in every ſentence almoſt the adjectives & epithetes are in ſtrictneſs metaphorical: that which is deſervedly blameable in this kind, is when, either they are boldly hal'd to our purpoſe, or (as was before intimated) when they are pil'd and ſtack'd up to the dimenſions of a luſty Allegory. The rules for ſuch Metaphors, which

may be commended, or at leaſt not diſdained, are firſt that they bear a due proportion and reſemblance to that, whereunto they are transferred, yet ſo that they ſhould be a little bigger, that they may may adde ſomewhat more to your matter: that they be clearly expreſſed, and ſuch, whoſe nature is well known, and appears like to that, whereunto it is applied, and to ſay all in a word, that they be faſhionable, and ſuch, which the beſt cuſtom of

ſpeech

ſpeech hath allowed. What hath been ſaid of Metaphors, will ſuit to all ſimilitudes; about which you muſt take care, that they ſtand not too thick together, that they be fitted to the auditory, neither too difficult to be underſtood, nor too mean, either for the nature of the thing, or quality of the perſons, to whom you apply: further that they be not too big, nor ſtrain'd, nor faint; but in preaching you muſt never compare God to any thing,

for there is neither proportion nor likeneſs betwixt him and creatures, as to eſſence: yet as to attributes, you may illuſtrate the proceedings of juſtice or mercy, and the like, by the common courſe of the beſt and wiſeſt Kings; yet ſo that theſe *Similes* (as all other) never ſtand in the place of an argument, but follow after a full proof; and then may they adde light and beauty to your diſcourſe: nor may you parallel the myſteries of Chriſtian Religion

gion with the Heathen's mythology, intending thereby in ſome meaſure to explain that, which depends only upon divine revelation, atteſted by miracles: nor ſhould you ſtudy to prove the Trinity in Unity (as ſome have attempted) by the compariſon of three folds in the ſame cloath, or by three faculties or powers in the ſoul, which all are one in eſſence, or by the ſimilitude betwixt him and the ſubſtance, light and heat of the Sun. The

truth of ſuch articles is not to be made evident from compariſons, which prove nothing, but from Scripture, ſo interpreted by moſt ancient Councils and Fathers. Another Figure which you may pretty often uſe with good advantage, is *Synonimie*: this gives ſeveral words ſignifying well nigh the ſame thing; it comes in ſeaſon every where, but in the ſtating of a Propoſition, and then it's incongruous to that ſhortneſs, which is alwayes requir'd in that particular

particular caſe. It is an ornament of ſpeech, and very gracefull in moſt parts of diſcourſe, as making it more fluent by the addition of freſh ſtreams, yet ſo that you pour not forth words, as they come into your mouth, but with a choice of good and very proper ones, and by ſuch degrees, that the latter may adde more dignity to that, which you intend to adorn. There is likewiſe in great reputation that which we call *Antitheſis*, or the oppoſition of things very

very different: this gives comelineſs, as ſhadowing colours do to pictures, if it be uſed with diſcretion, and in meaſure: The like too may be ſaid of all ſorts of diſtributions, where the parts are ſet anſwerably one over againſt another. It would be tedious and needleſs to reckon up all the figures by name, moſt of them being generally known, and the reſt not worth knowing: yet I ſhall anon give you ſome further account of thoſe, which moſt powerfully

ſtir

ſtir the affections, having firſt ſaid a little more concerning the ſchemes of words, of which there be both good and bad, thoſe which may be reckoned ſomething good, are when the ſame word is repeated twice without any other interpos'd, or in the beginning of ſeveral ſentences immediately joyned together: this adds to the vehemency of ſpeech, & therefore ſhould be referred to the moving of the paſſions. That which I account bad is the uſe of ſchemes rela-

ting

ting to words of the same sound: this hath been sufficiently exposed by a late Author; so that nothing is left for me to do, but to refer you thither, and to plead in behalf of the Authors without defending their practice, that they herein erred with *Cicero*, who at the same time imitated the best *Attick* wits, and it was so common a mistake, that you find it taught and enjoyn'd by most Rhetoricians; so that all that with modesty can be said against the usage is, that

that the general ſuffrage of our times, (which gives laws to ſtile) hath decried and voted it down. In the rank of figures, which move the affections, theſe are beſt worthy your notice: firſt exclamation; this ſhews the greatneſs of what you go about, either to commend or diſpraiſe, and diſcovers the earneſtneſs of your mind for, or againſt it, and thereby is likely to communicate the ſame apprehenſions to your hearers. The next to be mentioned is the bring-

ing

ing in of a perſon ſpeaking; this is uſefull in reproof, or aggravating of a vice, when we feign his perſon to give a hiſtory of his ſinfull life, ſo as to repreſent it odious in its own colours, or bring in another perſon ſpeaking to them by you, who muſt be alwayes a divine Author, or a pious relation, to whom they owe, and are likely to pay the higheſt reſpect. That which further tends to diſſwaſion, is a ſhow of being at a ſtand, as doubting how to call, or with

with what to compare the groſs ſin againſt which you declame: this may be perform'd by naming ſome heinous word, and then correcting your ſelf, as having ſaid ſomething too little and beneath its ill quality: this ſhould be accompanied with a ſerious deprecation of puniſhments formerly inflicted upon the like offences, and with a paſſionate beſeeching of them to reform and forſake thoſe wayes which lead to manifeſt deſtruction. Such

formes

formes as theſe have a mighty influence upon all men, who are not yet paſt feeling; ſo that you manage this eſſay upon their affections gravely and naturally, and with an unfeigned concern of ſorrow for their fault, and an endeavour for their happy condition: without this all the artifices of Rhetorick are too weak to prevail, and ſo thin, that the hearer may diſcover it to be nothing elſe but a neat harangue, made only for the pleaſure, not

inſtruction

inſtruction of the people, and ſpoken with deſign of gaining credit to the compoſer; ſo that you ſee from hence, how true that ſaying of *Quintilian* is, *That an Orator ought to be a good man.* His work is to perſwade and move, and that man ſooneſt does it, who hath thoſe characters of goodneſs, lately mention'd, impreſs'd upon his ſoul. You may now perhaps expect ſomewhat concerning periods and numbers in ſpeech: as to this I adviſe, that you

ſtand

ſtand almoſt indifferent, and that you be not anxiouſly carefull, how a ſentence will fall into exact meaſures and proportions: this is too delicate and effeminate; yet on the other hand do not wholly neglect them, ſince that, if art make them not unnatural, the hearer is led on with a ſecret harmony and innocent charms, and indeed they are fitteſt for amplifications and enlarged diſcourſes, ſuch as Sermons ſhould be: that which you muſt look af-

ter

ter in these is, that they come not in too close order, nor be all alike. In reproofs the structure of the words as well as the sence should be rough and chiding; upon the occasions of praising or comfort more smooth and gently flowing. As to the length of your periods, see that they seldom exceed four colons or members, the long ones, besides that they are flat & unpleasant to our ears, do hinder the memory from taking in the whole. This you may

prevent

prevent by keeping closer
to your written notes, t
without taking the liberty f
to speak your sudden and b
undigested thoughts: 'tis p
true, you may after long y
exercise in preaching, ad-t
venture upon *extempor* fr
enlargements; but this
must be the fruit of long h
studies and the reward only
continu'd labour, whereby
your stile is secur'd against
the dangers of that easier
and plausible way. I have
now finished the directi-
ons concerning the Matter
and Stile of Sermons, there
remain

remains only that which the Ancients call'd the ſtile and eloquence of the body, that is, geſture and pronunciation, as to that, you need not learn from the Stage (as *Tully* did from *Roſcius*) how to behave your ſelf: it is enough, that you pronounce cleerly & man-like, with ſome ſignificant ſmall inflexion of the voice, as the matter requires; yet ſo that it never differ from the familiar and natural ſound. As to the geſture, let it comply with the things and ſentences